



Food Safety in Scouting

Introduction

This fact sheet provides advice on how Food Safety Laws and Regulations affect Scouting. It contains information not only to keep you on the right side of the law, but also to keep young people and adults safe and healthy.

The law says a “business” can include a canteen, club, school etc. whether for profit or not. A “food business” means any undertaking, whether for profit or not and whether public or private, carrying out any of the activities related to any stage of production, processing and distribution and the importation and exportation of food.

If your activity means you are running a food business, then you have a legal obligation to obey the law. If not then don't you have a moral obligation to the young people in your care to follow the rules laid down by the legislation? Any law only lays down the minimum standards that must be maintained. As a member of The Scout Association of Malta, if the activity we are running involves food, we must do our best to at least meet these minimum standards and preferably exceed them.

Do we need to register our H.Q.?

The Laws and Regulations that came into force on the 1st January 2002 require that premises used for food businesses must be registered with the Superintendent of Public Health and licensed by the Health Authorities.

No person may use any premises as a food premises for the purposes of a food business for three or more days, whether consecutive or not, in any period of three consecutive weeks unless such premises are registered with the Superintendent of Public Health.

The Registration of Food Premises Regulations may be viewed on

<http://docs.justice.gov.mt/lom/legislation/english/subleg/231/47.pdf>.

Our Food Safety Act may be viewed on http://docs.justice.gov.mt/lom/legislation/english/leg/vol_14/chapt449.pdf

Basically, if you have your own headquarters and you have a kitchen, then you should be registered and licensed.

Registration of premises is easy. Forms can be obtained from the six regions present in Malta – namely at St Paul's Bay, Paola, Birkirkara, Zebbug, Hamrun and Sliema.

What do I do about food hygiene?

The following notes are based on guidance to professional food handlers. Not all of them will apply to our work in Scouting, but the majority will. As you read them, you will see how they apply to you, what you need to do to follow the rules, and what can happen if you don't.

The rules are simple and straightforward and are nearly all based on good common sense.

These laws and regulations should mean only minor changes for well run Groups. As the law is intended to cover the whole range of food premises, it takes a very general approach and can seem vague. If you have specific problems you can enquire at the Public Health Department based at 37/39, Rue d'Argens, Msida, or at one of the six Regions present in Malta, i.e. St Paul's Bay, Paola, Birkirkara, Zebbug, Hamrun and Sliema. They would much prefer to help you get it right than pick up the pieces if it all goes wrong.

Ok, but what about camp?

All laws are open to interpretation, which is why we have judges and courts. It really isn't



clear whether these laws apply to the camps we run.

As has been said before, it all depends, but possibly not for the majority of camps run at Group level.

However, whether they do or not, to ensure the safety of ALL our Scout Members we must still follow the basic rules laid down by the law. Most are now readily achieved on well run camps. Storage temperatures are probably the most difficult to achieve. Even this problem can be overcome either by careful menu planning and choice of ingredients that are safe to store and produce, or by providing suitable storage, cool boxes, portable refrigerators, or careful purchase of perishable items just before use, or, the most likely outcome, a combination of all of these.

So what are these rules?

FOOD HYGIENE

As a food handler, it is important that you ensure that you maintain the highest standard of cleanliness and hygiene at all times. Think clean!

The incidence of food poisoning has been on the increase for many years, often resulting in some large and highly publicised outbreaks. Many people do not bother to report mild attacks of food-borne illness, putting it down to an upset stomach, a dose of the runs or perhaps even too much to drink.

Food poisoning can cause symptoms ranging from a mild stomach upset to nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea and in certain cases, particularly amongst the old, very young or those weakened by other illness - death.

Food poisoning is preventable. It is normally caused by negligence or ignorance. We all eat food every day and most of us prepare food most days. Therefore, we believe it is

safe and that anybody can do it, which isn't always the case.

Food Poisoning

Food poisoning is an unpleasant gastric illness, which usually occurs within a few hours to a few days of eating contaminated or poisonous food.

Symptoms normally last from one to seven days and include one or more of the following:

Abdominal pain, diarrhoea, vomiting, nausea, headache, fever, and even collapse.

In exceptional cases, death can result from food poisoning.

High-Risk Foods

High risk foods are usually considered as those which support the multiplication of harmful bacteria. High risk foods are, in general, also intended to be consumed without any further treatment such as cooking, which would destroy harmful food poisoning bacteria. High risk foods include cooked meat and poultry, cooked meat products, egg products and dairy foods. These foods should always be kept separate from raw food, which must always be regarded as contaminated, but which are subsequently going to be prepared and cooked. It is therefore important to store raw meats, poultry and fish in a refrigerator below cooked foods.

Even better would be to store raw and fresh food in different refrigerators, or in camp conditions, in separate cool boxes. It is better to use separate coloured chopping boards for raw foods, cooked foods and vegetables. If this is not possible then ensure that the boards and equipment that are used are washed in very hot soapy water between each use. The use of anti-bacterial sprays on work surfaces is another good way of eliminating bacteria.



Hand washing is probably the most important thing to remember. You cannot wash your hands too much when preparing or eating food. Remember that our young people should also wash their hands before helping to prepare food, set tables or eating. This would also apply when just taking your young people on an outing for the day. When using gloves to prepare food treat them like your hands, wash them before using them and in between if necessary.

Remember, food that is contaminated by food poisoning bacteria usually looks, tastes and smells completely normal. Food poisoning bacteria cannot be detected without laboratory examination.

HIGH RISK FOODS

FOOD TYPE	BACTERIA	PREVENTIONS
Ice Cream	Salmonella Staphylococcus Aureus	Eat immediately or keep in freezer until required. Keep in fridge/cool box for 1-2 hours DO NOT REFREEZE ONCE DEFROSTED
Cream / Yoghurt Creamy desserts	Salmonella Staphylococcus Aureus	Keep chilled or eat within 1-2 hours of purchase, or store in cool box for maximum 24 hours
Cooked meat or poultry	Campylobacter Salmonella e.Coli	Always defrost before cooking. Ensure fully cooked. Eat immediately or chill and store in fridge Eat within two days of cooking if kept at chilled temperature. MUST BE EATEN WITHIN 2 HOURS IF NOT CHILLED
Cooked meat products (i.e. stew / soups / sauces)	Campylobacter Salmonella e.Coli Clostridium perfringens	Eat immediately or cool to below 5°C. When reheated should reach above 63°C DO NOT LEAVE IN PAN ON STOVE UNLESS HEAT REMAINS ON
Fresh milk / cream	Salmonella Staphylococcus Aureus	Should always be kept at chilled temperature DO NOT LEAVE IN AMBIENT TEMPERATURES
Seafood	Scrombrotoxic Temperature control is very important to avoid this	Must be kept chilled before cooking or eating. Ensure that the fish is fully cooked. Fish can be cooked from frozen but ensure fully cooked in the centre. Shellfish must be kept fully chilled



Cooked rice / pasta	Bacillus cereus	Before cooking rice/pasta is very low risk but once cooked becomes high risk. Eat as soon as cooked or chill and reheat to 70°C or above. Chill rapidly in cold water DO NOT LEAVE TO CHILL
Vegetables / salads	e.Coli Listeria Shigella	Salads and vegetables must be washed well to remove any dirt. Peeling and re-washing will also help to minimise any risk. Cooking vegetables will destroy the bacteria.
Tins (these products have a botulinium) Cook 121°C for 3 mins)**	Cholstridium Botulinum	Damaged, blown or leaking cans should never be used – dispose of them
Cooked Eggs	Salmonella	Eat eggs whilst hot or hard boiled. Chill rapidly and keep chilled before eating. ALWAYS WASH HANDS AFTER HANDLING RAW EGGS

** All foods with pH of 4.5 or less are known as acid foods. Fruit have a pH of less than 4.5 so do not require such a high pasteurising heat process.

The guide above is to help reduce the risk of food related illness. Using common sense and the information contained in this fact sheet should keep you and your young people safe.

Bacteria

Bacteria are microscopic organisms, often referred to as germs. These are found everywhere, including on and in humans and animals, on food, in water, soil and air. Most bacteria are harmless and some are essential to life, being an essential part of the body's defence mechanisms. Some bacteria are important in food manufacture, for instance in the manufacture of cheese and yoghurt. However, a small number of bacteria are harmful, these are known as pathogens. Certain pathogenic organisms live and multiply in food intended for human

consumption. It is these that give rise to food poisoning.

Sources of food poisoning bacteria

(a) People commonly harbour food poisoning bacteria in their noses, mouths, intestines and also on the skin. Food may be contaminated directly by the hand, sneezing or coughing.

(b) Raw food is particularly hazardous, especially red meat, poultry (up to 80% of frozen poultry carries salmonella) untreated milk, shellfish and eggs. Raw food should



always be kept separate from high risk food (high protein foods which have been cooked and will receive no further heat treatment).

(c) Insects may transmit food poisoning bacteria to food. Flies and cockroaches present the greatest hazard, due to their feeding habits and the sites they visit.

(d) Rodents (rats and mice) commonly excrete organisms such as salmonella. Contamination of food and food preparation surfaces may occur from their droppings, urine, hair and by gnawing. Animals and birds, both domestic and wild are known to carry harmful bacteria on their bodies and in their intestines.

Animals, including domestic pets, must not be allowed near food preparation areas.

(e) Refuse and waste food must not be allowed to accumulate in food preparation areas. Care must be taken to avoid contamination of food from waste either directly or indirectly. Food handlers must always remember to wash their hands after dealing with refuse, waste food and dustbins.

(f) Dust is also a source of bacteria. Bacteria are carried in the air and are therefore always liable to settle on food. Food should always be covered.

Requirements for bacterial growth

Food poisoning bacteria do not give rise to food poisoning unless there are sufficient numbers (infective dose). This means there must be a sufficient number of bacteria in the food to cause disruption to the body's defence mechanism. For this to occur there must be between 100,000 to 1,000,000 organisms per gram of food. The number of organisms required to cause an illness will depend on the infecting organism and the individual concerned.

For food poisoning to occur, therefore, bacteria must be able to grow and multiply in the food before it is consumed.

Bacteria responsible for causing food poisoning need the following conditions to enable them to grow and multiply in number:

1. Warmth

The best temperature for the growth of food poisoning bacteria is 37°C (body temperature). Food poisoning bacteria will, however, grow in the range of 5°C to 63°C; this is often referred to as the danger zone. To prevent bacterial growth therefore, food must either be kept hot or cold i.e. below 5°C or above 63°C.

Below 5°C food poisoning bacteria will not multiply.

Above 63°C food poisoning bacteria will die.

2. Food and moisture

Moist, high protein foods are preferred, especially meat, poultry and dairy products. Drying has been used throughout history for preserving; bacteria need a level of moisture to grow.

3. Time

Given the right conditions of food, moisture and warmth, certain food poisoning bacteria can divide into two every ten minutes. For this reason it is essential that high risk foods are kept hot or kept cold to prevent bacterial multiplication.

PREVENTION OF FOOD POISONING

We have already described where bacteria come from and the conditions which they need to grow and multiply. How can we therefore prevent food poisoning occurring? There are three main ways of breaking the food poisoning chain:

1. Protecting food from contamination

(a) Keep food covered wherever possible.

(b) Do not use damaged or dirty equipment. Inspect all equipment before use even when using a building. Clean and sanitise all work surfaces with an anti-bacterial spray, before and after use.



(c) Handle food as little as possible. Wherever possible tongs or other suitable equipment should be used in preference to hands.

(d) Raw and cooked foods must be kept separate at all stages of preparation, storage and distribution. Ideally, the same equipment and work surfaces must not be used for raw and cooked foods. Where this is unavoidable, equipment and surfaces must be thoroughly washed and sterilised in between uses. Sterilisation can be achieved by using very hot water or a sterilising agent. For work surfaces anti-bacterial sprays can be purchased from most supermarkets.

(e) Insects, animals (including pets) and birds must be prevented from entering or living in food preparation or storage areas. Remember rats are pests and are very clever. Keep all packet foods in lidded containers.

(f) Maintain the highest standards of personal hygiene at all times. Wash your hands after smoking, sneezing, coughing, after visiting the toilet, handling rubbish as well as before and after handling food. Clothes must also be clean.

(g) Ensure unfit food, waste food and refuse is removed from food preparation areas regularly and promptly.

(h) Use correct cleaning procedures.

2. Prevention of bacterial multiplication

(a) Store food out of the danger zone. High risk foods should be stored either below 5°C in a refrigerator, or kept above 63°C, preferably above 70°C (for example in a Bain Marie or hot cabinet). This is not possible in camping conditions so it is better not to cook food before required unless it can be rapidly chilled then heated to above 70°C.

(b) Make sure that during preparation, food is kept within the danger zone (between 5°C-63°C) for as short a period of time as

possible. High risk foods must not be left at ambient (room) temperature. If cooked food needs to be cooled before refrigeration, it should be cooled as quickly as possible and in any event not left out of refrigeration for any more than one or two hours.

(c) Use suitable preservatives, such as salt or sugar, to inhibit bacterial growth.

(d) Do not allow dried foods to become moist as this will encourage the growth of bacteria and moulds.

3. Destruction of bacteria within food

(a) This can be achieved by thorough cooking. Thorough cooking means that a temperature of at least 70°C for two minutes should be achieved throughout the substance of the food under preparation.

(b) Heat processing, such as pasteurisation, sterilisation or canning also destroys bacteria.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

Most people carry some type of food poisoning organism at some time, and food handlers have a moral and legal responsibility to observe high standards of personal cleanliness to ensure that they do not contaminate food and give rise to food poisoning. If you are suffering from any infectious disease you must not handle food and must report your condition to your leader/supervisor.

Hands and skin

As the hands are in direct contact with food, they are the main route for transferring food poisoning bacteria. Hands must be washed regularly throughout the working day and especially:

a) after visiting the toilet,

b) before handling any food or equipment,



- c) in between handling raw and cooked foods,
- d) after combing or touching the hair,
- e) after eating,
- f) after smoking (not in the food room).
- g) after sneezing or blowing the nose,
- h) after handling waste food or refuse,
- i) after handling raw eggs.

All these points should be emphasised to ALL scout members involved in the preparation and cooking of food. Obviously suitable facilities will need to be provided for hand washing. Special attention should be paid to outdoor events as animals spread bacteria. Some form of hand washing needs to be available. If soap and water is not available then hand wipes should be used. Remember it is not difficult to have a flask of warm water, bowls, soap and towels for outdoor events. Hand wipes can be substituted in a hiking situation.

Cuts, spots, boils etc.

Cuts, spots, boils, etc. provide an ideal place for bacterial multiplication (providing warmth, moisture, food and time). To prevent contamination of food by harmful bacteria, blood, cuts, spots etc. should be completely covered by a waterproof dressing. These dressings should preferably be brightly coloured so they can be easily seen if they become detached and mixed with the food. Coloured (blue) plasters, which are metal detectable are used in the food industry. They can be detected by the use of a metal detector. It is acceptable to use any colour provided that the plaster is waterproof. It is however better to wear a plastic glove over the dressing to avoid contamination to both the food and the cut. Remember that when wearing gloves they should be treated as hands.

Jewellery

No jewellery other than a plain gold ring should be worn whilst engaged in handling food. Items of jewellery such as ear-rings, watches and ornate rings set with stones can become detached and drop into food. In addition, it is not possible to keep them spotlessly clean so they may harbour bacteria, which can give rise to food poisoning. Again this is the standard for the food industry but it is advisable to follow this rule.

Smoking

It is illegal to use snuff and tobacco, including cigarettes, pipes or cigars in a food room or whilst engaged in handling open food. Smoking cannot only lead to the contamination of food by cigarette ends and ash, but can give rise to cross-contamination.

- a) Whilst smoking you touch your lips with your fingers and this can result in the transfer of harmful bacteria to food.
- b) Smoking encourages coughing and, therefore, droplet infection.
- c) Cigarette ends contaminated with saliva may be placed on work surfaces.
- d) It is bad practice to stand outside a kitchen door smoking and creates a bad image, so this should be discouraged.

This rule should also apply when camping, do not smoke in the areas where food is being prepared.

Protective clothing

The law requires that all food handlers should wear clean, washable, protective, over-clothing. Protective garments should be appropriate for the work being carried out,



preferably be light coloured and should completely cover ordinary clothing.

This may not be appropriate at camp where simple aprons, an overall or even a white tee-shirt will be suitable, but would apply to training courses, hostels, etc. Aprons should be washed regularly and hung up in a secure area when not preparing food.

STORAGE AND TEMPERATURE OF FOOD

Correct storage of food is fundamental to food hygiene and to the co-operation of any food business.

Dry food stores

Rooms used for the storage of dried and canned foods should be dry, cool, well lit, ventilated, vermin proof and be maintained in a clean and tidy condition. Food should be stored off the floor, to facilitate cleaning. Spillages of any sort should be cleaned up promptly.

When at camp follow the above advice but it would be safer to store in lidded containers to avoid contamination by insects and animals.

Canned foods

The risk of contracting an illness from canned foods is very small. Ensure, however, that:

- a) badly dented, seem-damaged, punctured or rusty cans are rejected as these may be a potential source of harmful bacteria
- b) stock rotation is carried out, i.e. first in, first out. When at camp, wipe can lids with a cloth dampened with anti-bacterial spray before opening. This also applies to cans stored away between camps. Remember to check for any of the above and also outdated cans before using following storage.

Refrigeration

High risk perishable foods may be contaminated by harmful bacteria, which can multiply to dangerous levels if not stored under refrigerated conditions. Please ensure that you observe the following:

- a) Refrigerators should normally operate between 1°C and 4°C.
- b) The refrigerator temperature should be checked daily.
- c) The refrigerator should be defrosted and cleaned regularly in compliance with manufacturer's instructions.
- d) Do not overload the refrigerator.
- e) Perishable foods including milk and dairy should be stored in the refrigerator; this includes vacuum packs and pasteurised cans of meat. Do not use up valuable refrigerator space with bottled or canned drinks.
- f) Adequate refrigeration may inhibit the growth of pathogenic organisms, but it will not inhibit the growth of some spoilage organisms, so that stock rotation is important if food spoilage is to be prevented. Remember, first in, first out.

Contamination and covering food

Raw food must always be kept apart from high risk food. Separate refrigerators are preferred, but if this is not possible the raw food must be placed at the bottom of the refrigerator, in order to prevent contamination by dripping. Food should be covered to prevent drying out, cross-contamination and the absorption of odours. When camping, separate cool boxes are ideal. Ensure that you can get your cool pack refrozen or use portable refrigerators.

Thawing of frozen foods

Most food taken from the freezer can be cooked immediately, but certain items such as poultry and large joints must be completely thawed before cooking. The manufacturer's instructions should always be followed. Particular care must be taken when thawing raw, frozen meat, especially poultry. Thawing should take place in a container with deep sides in order to prevent overflow of "bloody"



water. Ideally, thawing should take place in a refrigerator, but if this is not possible, then in a cool area. The food should be covered to prevent cross-contamination.

Stock rotation

Stock rotation is important to ensure that older food is used first. This is essential to avoid spoilage. Stock rotation applies to all types of food, perishable foods, fresh fruits and vegetables and even tinned and dried goods.

Daily checks should be made on short life perishable food stored in refrigerators to ensure that it is still fit and sound for human consumption.

Preparation, cooking and cooling of food

The observance of good, hygiene practice during food preparation is important in the prevention of food poisoning. Raw food and high risk food should ideally be prepared in separate areas with separate equipment. If this is not possible, then raw food and high risk food should be kept separate. All equipment and work surfaces which come in contact with raw and cooked foods should be thoroughly washed and sterilised after each and every use.

The handling of food should be kept to a minimum. Food handlers should work in a logical, planned manner, to ensure that food is not left at atmospheric temperature for longer than is absolutely necessary. Work surfaces should be clean and tidy, spillages and waste food must be cleared away promptly.

Thorough cooking of food is important to destroy harmful bacteria. To ensure that food is thoroughly cooked, it should reach a temperature of at least 70°C in the centre. After cooking, the food should be eaten as soon as possible. If, however, food is to be kept hot prior to serving it, it must be maintained at a temperature above 63°C, ideally around 70°C, to allow a margin for error. Always cut through poultry and meat to ensure it is fully cooked.

If food is to be refrigerated after cooking, it should be cooled as quickly as possible and then placed in the refrigerator. In any event it

should not be left at atmospheric temperature for more than an hour and a half after cooking. It is better to use smaller joints of meat and smaller size poultry as they will cook and cool more rapidly.

Re-heating of pre-cooked dishes should be avoided where possible. If food is to be re-heated, it must be heated right through, achieving a minimum centre temperature of 70°C. (Check this with a clean sterile probe thermometer.)

The use of a thermometer at Scout events is not always practical but ensures that the food being heated is fully heated and very hot. Ensure that your young people are made aware of this when they are cooking for themselves.

In order to prevent bacterial growth, the time before:

- (a) refrigeration and cooking
- (b) cooking and eating
- (c) cooking and refrigeration
- (d) refrigeration and serving

...must be kept as short as possible.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

The soiling of surfaces and equipment is unavoidable in all food preparation. It is essential that such residues are not allowed to accumulate to levels which expose food to risk of contamination. The removal of food residues, dirt, grease, etc. is the process of cleaning. To be effective, cleaning must be planned. A properly planned cleaning schedule must be prepared. This should contain details of the area or piece of equipment to be cleaned right down to the person who is to clean it, frequency of cleaning and the materials to be used. Catering staff must be trained to clean as they go along, in order to prevent the build up of dirt and food debris. Obviously in camp, this would be dealt with by normal good housekeeping. Ensure that food debris is not left on tables, cookers or on the floor. Always clean tables before and after use, using fresh hot soapy water before using an anti bacterial spray. Take all unused foods back to the store tent and store correctly and safely.



Storage and disposal of waste

Suitable receptacles should be provided both inside and outside food premises for the disposal of waste food. Disposable polythene sacks in a holder or as a bin liner are suitable for internal use and dustbins for external use. Dustbins must have a close fitting lid, in order to prevent access by vermin and flies, and to prevent the spread of smells. All refuse containers must be emptied and cleaned regularly. In particular, all refuse and waste food material must be removed from inside any preparation area regularly. This is most important at camp to deter birds and pests. Consider carefully how you dispose of water and other liquids.

Pest control

Regular checks of your kitchen and storage areas must be carried out to ensure that they are pest free. In particular, examinations should be made for rodents, i.e. rats and mice, flies, cockroaches and other insects; particularly those, which infest dried and stored food. Dispose of any food that shows signs of pest damage.

Pest control is important to prevent the spread of disease, wastage of food and to comply with the law. Ideally pest control is best carried out by private companies.

When at camp the easiest way to avoid pest problems is not to leave any food or rubbish where it may attract them. Think clean.

Display and service of food

1. On arrival at the premises where the food is to be served, remember to keep it under temperature control, either in a refrigerator or hot cupboard, i.e. below 5°C or above 63°C.

2. Cold food should be kept cold for as long as possible before serving and, in any event, should not be displayed for more than an hour and a half before consumption.

3. Hot food should be kept hot. If it is to be reheated, then this is to be done quickly and thoroughly ensuring that an even temperature

penetration is achieved reaching a minimum of 70°C.

4. If catering for more than one meal, ensure that food intended for the second meal is kept cool, i.e. below 5°C until required. If there is insufficient refrigeration storage facilities return home to collect fresh supplies when ready.

5. Keep food on display covered for as long as possible before consumption, using metal foil, cling-film, clean paper, sterilized cloth such as muslin.

6. Provide sufficient serving utensils so that people do not have to use their fingers.

7. Make sure that everyone is aware of good hygiene principles and practice as outlined in these guidance notes.

SAFETY IN THE KITCHEN

It is essential that all persons engaged in the preparation, cooking and service of food are aware of the need for certain safety precautions in order to minimise the risk of accident.

1. Do not leave metal spoons in boiling liquids.

2. Do not leave handles of cooking pans over the gas flame.

3. Always carry a knife with its point towards the floor.

4. Never attempt to catch a knife if you drop it.

5. Always cut or chop on a board, never in the hand.

6. When using a hand model can opener, protect the other hand with a cloth or kitchen towel.

7. Always clean up any spilled grease or fat from the floor immediately using hot soapy water.

8. Never use a damp cloth for lifting or carrying hot utensils as heat will penetrate

9. quicker through a damp cloth than through a dry cloth.
10. Never wear sandals or open shoes in the kitchen.
11. Hot fat which has caught fire should be extinguished by smothering it with a fire blanket or a thick damp cloth. Never put water on a fat or oil fire.
12. Long hair styles should be put-up and covered with a clean head cap or similar means of protection.
13. For economy, as well as safety, all gas and electrical appliances must be turned off when not in use. Gas cylinders should be turned off at source when not in use. Rubber hoses should be checked regularly for signs of deterioration.
14. Make sure that the First Aid box is readily accessible and that it contains sufficient waterproof dressings and burn dressings.
15. Never attempt to carry large heavy containers of hot food single-handed. Get assistance.
16. Do not reach over naked flames.
17. Always ensure that gravity meat slicers are adequately guarded.
18. Never place cleaning fluids into bottles originally used for food or drink e.g. lemonade and milk bottles.
19. Do not place knives or other sharp implements in washing up bowl unless you intend to wash them immediately. You may be distracted and forget they are in there.

MENU PLANNING

The information in this fact sheet has implications for everyone responsible for planning menus, whether these menus are for a one week annual camp or an evening meeting at the Scout Headquarters where refreshments are available.

The choice of menu should be based on much more than convenience and cost – food safety must enter the equation. For all situations away from the domestic kitchen and especially at camp, consider the following with care:

- The temperature at which food should be stored is more difficult to maintain.
- Preparation times may be longer because of the sheer volume of food, the limitations of space and equipment. This will increase the time that high risk foodstuffs are exposed to temperatures which encourage bacterial multiplication.
- Cross-contamination is more likely because of minimal facilities. It is more difficult to keep raw and cooked foods separate.
- The adequate de-frosting of frozen foods is more difficult to control.
- There is increased chance that dried foods will become moist.

Some tips on menu planning:

- Try to avoid high risk (pre-cooked high protein) foods.
- Consider safe options to hazardous foodstuffs – will tinned corned beef suffice in place of raw mince?
- Help youngsters to recognise the added importance of food hygiene in the kitchen, especially at camp. Design the camp kitchen for hygiene as well as convenience and safety.
- Take into account the transit time of food from the point of purchase (or removal from temperature controlled conditions) to the point of preparation and consumption.
- Treat long life products such as milk and cream as fresh once opened.
- Plan your menu according to the storage and cooking facilities that you will have.



Food Safety Act 2002 and Registration of Food Premises Regulations 2002

These regulations were introduced to regulate all food and food premises in the Maltese Islands. As described in the Food Safety Act, '**food**' means anything used as a food ingredient, drink, dietary supplements and water intended for human consumption. The definition of food also includes drinks such as potable water in a liquid or a solid state; and also food items such as chewing gum or other similar products. Live animals or birds, or live fish which are not intended for human consumption while alive are not included in the definition of food. This applies also to animal feeds and tobacco products.

A '**food business**' means any undertaking whether for profit or not and whether public or private, carrying out any of the activities related to any stage of production, processing and distribution of food, for example: selling, possessing for sale, delivering, preparing, labelling and storage. A '**food premises**' means any premises used for the purposes of a food business, and includes various types of structures such as stalls (in open or closed markets), vehicles (movable or not), and sea-going vessels (including fishing vessels).

The Registration of Food Premises Regulations states that no person can use a premises as a food business unless such premises are registered with the Department of Public Health. If the premises is used a food business for three or more days, whether consecutive or not, in any period of three consecutive weeks, then registration is required. Registration is simple and fast; it can also be downloaded Department of Public Health website, from which more info can be obtained.

The Food Safety Act applies to all food products intended for sale on the local market or intended for export. This Act also applies to any food which is offered as a prize or given away in connection with any entertainment (whether the public is

admitted on payment of money or not). The meaning of the word 'entertainment' according to this act means any social gathering, amusement, exhibition, performance, game, sport or trial of skill.

Further information and guidance can be obtained by visiting these websites:

- Department of Public Health:
http://www.health.gov.mt/dph/public%20health%20services%20in%20malta_files/index.htm
- Food Safety Commission:
<http://www.health.gov.mt/fsc/fschome.htm>

There is an additional fact sheet FSHS002 *Camp Food Safety*, which you may also find useful.